



TRUMP DEAL OFFERS
PALESTINIANS NOTHING

'Peace and prosperity' plan gives Israeli state all it has ever wanted >>Pages 10&11



'WE WON'T BE
DIVIDED BY VIRUS'

York students determined to resist racism after infection on their campus >>Page 7

Socialist Worker

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AFTER STREATHAM SHOOTING COPS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

THE TORIES have launched a new "law and order" crackdown.

It comes after Sudesh Amman stabbed and injured two people. Amman was then gunned down by police and military intelligence who were monitoring him.

Afterwards Boris Johnson announced "measures to strengthen every element of our response to terrorism—including longer prison sentences and more money for the police".

Cabinet minister Michael Gove gave the message a particular twist. "There is a big difference between those people who are Islamist extremist terrorists and those convicted of other offences," he said. This will not be the end of the process. Government



ARMED POLICE on the streets of Streatham last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

ministers were this week said to be considering calls for the immediate re-imprisonment of everyone who was ever convicted of a terror offence and has been released.

And the Sun newspaper took this mood to its endpoint on Tuesday when it demanded, "Throw away the key".

Instead of looking at the roots of terror in Britain's wars, the Tories hope to benefit from falsely posing as the protectors of ordinary people.

More cops, harsher laws, bigger prisons, more spies and more money for repression benefit only the people at the top of society.

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STRIKES

Walkouts will hit 74 universities this month

FOURTEEN DAYS of strikes will hit 74 universities across Britain with action starting this month.

Members of the UCU union will walk out for two days on Thursday 20 February—and plan to escalate action to a week-long strike in March.

The strike is over pensions, pay, conditions and equality.

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ENVIRONMENT



COP26 in Glasgow faces mass protests

THE TORY strategy for the coming Cop26 climate conference is in disarray as the prime minister last week sacked the group's president.

But the mood among activists planning protests is electric. School climate strikers, workers, students and Extinction Rebellion came together last weekend.

>>Pages 5&7

IRELAND ELECTION

Left set to gain as main parties' support wanes

LEO VARADKAR hoped to get an easy ride to re-election as Taoiseach—prime minister—this week. He hoped the mess the British government had made of Brexit would make him appear like a reassuring figure.

But polls say he was wrong.

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NO TO NEW TORY TERROR LAWS



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Courtesy not least of Jeremy Corbyn'

Lord Peter Mandelson says the Tories in government is all the fault of the Labour leader

'Nasty, bigoted' and deluded'

Former Commons speaker John Bercow on Tory Andrea Leadsom

'24-carat snob'

Former Commons speaker John Bercow on Tory David Cameron

'Oleaginous'

Former Commons speaker John Bercow on Tory Michael Gove

'A weirdo, robotic, cold and uninspiring'

Former Commons speaker John Bercow on Tory William Hague

'We find ourselves talking again about the need to do more to ensure diversity'

Prince William complains at the Baftas

'On way to cabinet meeting in north England with friends'

Chancellor of the exchequer Sajid Javid was excited to head to the county of north England last week



Grenfell Inquiry—firms 'pass buck and blame each other'

THE INQUIRY into the Grenfell Tower fire heard last week that corporations had killed residents "in the pursuit of money".

Sam Stein, the lawyer for some of the survivors and victims' families, said that, "They killed those 72 people as sure as if they had taken careful aim with a gun and pulled the trigger."

Corporations due to give evidence this week in phase two of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry have been accused of trying to "sabotage" proceedings.

The companies involved in the refurbishment are facing charges of corporate manslaughter and gross negligence.

The inquiry heard an application for "privilege against incrimination" on Thursday last week.



Protest at the Grenfell inquiry

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

The firms threatened to hold back evidence if their request was not granted.

Rydon was the main contractor for the refurbishment.

It said in its opening statement that it could not take responsibility for the fire because it delegated the refurbishment to other contractors. But the

companies Rydon used are also dodging blame. Phase one of the inquiry found that the cladding was responsible for the spread of the fire that killed 72 people in 2017.

Arconic—the makers of the combustible cladding—have defended their role.

They said it "should have been obvious to anybody involved in construction that

its product was not of limited combustibility". And emails from Arconic in 2013 said that the cladding material "should have been discontinued ten years ago". It provided the cladding to be installed.

Harley Facades claimed that Arconic's brochure "gave no indication" that the cladding was not suitable.

Karim Mussilhy from Grenfell United said, "It's incredibly difficult and frustrating to sit here and hear these organisations passing the buck and blaming each other. It's clear that all of them had a role to play in the disaster."

"People are still unsafe in their homes. We know how dangerous the cladding was."

The inquiry was expected to rule on whether to grant immunity after Socialist Worker went to press.

BORIS JOHNSON celebrated getting Brexit done with a £350 bottle of posh red wine. The prime minister toasted exit from the EU with a 1994 vintage Chateau Margaux—left to him by a Tory in their will.

He marked the historic moment by striking a Chinese ornamental gong but had to do the countdown himself when his television broke down.

Boris and gong

THE OFGEM energy regulator has helped firms grab hundreds of millions of pounds more from customers. A National Audit Office report last week found that customers have paid at least £800 million too much for their energy bills over the past seven years.

It's no yolk—200 feral chickens overrun town

CRUEL TORIES in Norfolk are worrying about chickens coming home to roost.

The Tory-run South Norfolk council is clamping down on feral chickens

Up to 200 have been living in Diss, Norfolk, for more than two years after cocks and hens were abandoned by their owners.

Now the local authority has threatened locals with £80 fines if they keep feeding them.

Some reactionaires are cock-a-hoop at the crackdown. But animal lovers have cried fowl play and are spitting feathers, saying they are doing nothing wrong.



Chickens in Norfolk

Carol Morris, who regularly feeds the chickens, said, "There's one or two people that don't like them but they're in the minority. I feed them every day and there's no way I am going to stop."

Margaret Chapman added, "It's a sorry road to be threatening people with fines. Who do they think they are? "It's heavy-handed and draconian."

Deluge of Tory lies over flood compensation

AN "obscene postcode lottery" will stop hundreds of flooded households from receiving any compensation.

Boris Johnson promised grants of up to £5,000 for flood victims last November, after visiting flood-hit Fishlake in Yorkshire.

Yet the government will only give the money to people flooded between 8 and 18 November, and only in areas where more than 25 homes were affected.

More than 2,000 homes and businesses were affected last autumn.

Polly Ernest was forced



Cumbria in December

to evacuate her B&B in Hereford when it flooded on 25 October.

She still can't move back in, and is losing her income as a result.

"We flooded a week too early and we are in a safe Tory seat," she said. "We keep being told we are not eligible."

"It's disgusting."

Councils fail exploited children

AUTHORITIES ARE failing parents of children who are being sexually exploited, according to a new report.

The study, by Parents Against Child Exploitation (Pace), was launched in parliament last week.

It interviewed parents about their experiences of children's social care services.

The report found that attitudes and lack of resources stopped vulnerable children getting the support they need.

Social care staff "often minimised or dismissed the risks and harms a child was facing" or blamed parents for the abuse.

One parent said, "The approach from Children's Social Care was that I was being over protective."

Another said, "They just had this approach that everything was happening because of me."

"I wasn't listened to," added another. "I was the enemy. They'd implement these badly thought out decisions and I'd be left to pick up the pieces."

Some parents faced threats from those supposedly there to help them. "They held this threat over me of removing all of my children," said one parent. "It didn't keep my daughters safer."

Several felt the authorities didn't value their children. And a number referred to services being over-stretched and under-resourced.

British law used against Indian school

INDIAN POLICE have launched a seditious investigation against a primary school over a play that criticised a citizenship law.

There have been widespread demonstrations against the law introduced by the Hindu-nationalist government that grants citizenship to religious groups from three neighbouring countries, but excludes Muslims.

Police said they were laying initial charges under the British colonial-era law against the principal of the school in the southern state of Karnataka.

The five-minute play saw pupils talking about how they feared the government would ask Muslims to prove their nationality or be expelled from India.

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Powerful strikes win key NHS outsourcing victory

by GABBY THORPE

AROUND 1,000 health workers whose jobs had been farmed out to private firms are celebrating after strikes forced NHS bosses to bring them back in-house.

Some 200 outsourced porters, cleaners and caterers at St Mary's hospital in Paddington, west London, struck for nine days in October and November last year.

Victory for members of the United Voices of the World (UVW) union means Imperial College NHS Trust is terminating its contract with outsourcer Sodexo.

Workers across the trust's five hospital will be employed directly as NHS staff from 1 April.

It's an historic win. Other similar struggles have concentrated on gaining NHS terms and conditions for outsourced staff, or preventing outsourcing from happening.

Striker Baddredine told Socialist Worker that the dispute meant more workers wanted to fight alongside the strikers.

"We've had a lot of interest. I even heard that some of the nurses were going to join—it's good to see the union grow," he said.

Hundred

It's not the first victory for this group of workers.

Striker Loretta said, "In November our strikes forced bosses to pay us the London Living Wage. It meant we got several hundred pounds extra a month."

Crucially, workers were ready to fight for more.

"It wasn't enough," explains Loretta.

"We thought, 'Why shouldn't



HUGE WALKOUTS forced the bosses into retreat

PICTURE: UNITED VOICES OF THE WORLD

we be paid like all other NHS workers?' and we kept fighting for full equality."

And they were ready to go back to the picket lines—UVW union members voted overwhelmingly for an indefinite strike starting this month.

Under the new deal, workers have won improved sick pay. Their previous contract

allowed them only two days paid leave if they were ill.

This forced many of the low paid staff to come into work when sick—potentially endangering the health of patients.

"I won't have to choose between paying my rent and protecting my health," said Loretta.

UVW reported that workers are flooding into its 3,000-strong union, with around 200 people joining each month.

"I was a member of the GMB union before I joined UVW and it didn't do anything," said Baddredine.

"They held meetings at lunchtime sometimes, but apart from that they

left us. UVW fought for us, and now we have better work lives."

The Unison union also represents some workers who are being brought back in-house. But it's the militant strikes by UVW that scored this result.

This outsourcing victory is a massive step forward for workers' and migrants' rights.

It shows when unions take bold action they can win and serve as an inspiration for the entire working class movement.

What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Further austerity on way

BORIS JOHNSON has ordered cuts of at least 5 percent to every government department. His call comes ahead of the budget on 11 March.

Johnson and chancellor Sajid Javid told cabinet ministers last week to consider scrapping programmes that don't improve health, fight crime or tackle regional inequalities.

Johnson's general election campaign was full of rhetoric about increasing public spending. Now he will claim the new cuts are about protecting funding

for key services such as the NHS. But the Tories don't care about our services.

Johnson's election promise of the "biggest hospital building programme in a generation" fell apart in a day.

There is no need to cut any services—the money's there to pay for all of them. The richest 1,000 people in Britain saw their wealth rise by £48 billion between 2018 and last year, according to the Sunday Times.

We need to fight to take the money off the fat cats, and to end Tory austerity.



Sajid Javid

PCS union walkout escalates

UNION members working for private contractors at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office began a month-long strike on Monday of this week.

The strike, in central London, is taking the fight to the government.

Workers are demanding that Tory foreign secretary Dominic Raab takes responsibility for staff in his own government department employed by outsourcer Interserve.

PCS union rep Terry Rose told Socialist Worker that strikers were "all ready to go" as they escalated their long-running dispute over pay and privatisation.

The strikers—including cleaners, maintenance workers and security guards—have been fighting bosses at Interserve for over a year.

Workers first struck in March last year after Interserve took over their contracts and launched sweeping attacks.

These included a change from monthly pay to daily pay, as well as a change to pay dates.

After workers complained to their union about the changes, bosses axed company sick pay and got rid of one PCS union rep in a wave of redundancies.

Overtime pay has been scrapped but cleaners are expected to cover the same amount of work, even if that means extra hours.

Demanding

Strikers are demanding that Interserve recognises PCS as their union, and have 98 percent membership among facilities staff.

Yet after initially appearing to concede to this during negotiations at conciliation service Acas, Interserve bosses included more workers in the "bargaining unit".

This meant they could claim the PCS didn't represent enough workers to demand recognition.

"Even Acas said they'd seen nothing like it," said Terry. He added that after several months of shorter strikes, the workers were determined to escalate.

"We've struck at all the major events here, tried to hit them that way," he said. "We've had a week-long strike. So now we're going for a month."

Join picket lines, 7.30am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday until 28 February

REVIEW

AUSTRALIA'S POLITICAL FIRESTORM

Camilla Royle and Caitlin Doyle

Plus

Eliza Gearty on Alasdair Gray

John Newsinger on George Orwell

Terry Sullivan and Donny Gluckstein on Hegel and revolution

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AUSTRALIA'S POLITICAL FIRESTORM

UN STUDENTS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



Right want to use south London stabbings for more repression

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

BACK STORY

BORIS JOHNSON unveiled a wish list of repressive measures after the shooting of **Sudesh Amman** in Streatham, south London, on Sunday.

Johnson said that people convicted of terrorism offences will lose their right to early release if they are deemed to continue to pose a threat to the public.

And in a new and very dangerous measure, Johnson said that this would apply not just to people who are convicted in the future. It will affect those already in jail.

Such retrospective measures—which socialists have always opposed—mean that people who are sentenced under one system can find themselves facing a wholly new and worse situation.

Johnson said no one should be released “without cynical, hardened people looking into their eyes and really thinking whether or not these people will again pose a danger to the public”.

Home secretary Priti Patel has previously called for lie-detector tests for people seeking probation.

Criminalise

Already under consideration are plans to criminalise the simple possession of “terrorist propaganda”—anything deemed to glorify or encourage extremism.

Currently, only the distribution of such material or possession of material considered useful to the commissioning of a terrorist act, are criminal.

Amman was shot dead by police after stabbing and injuring two people. The 20 year old had been freed after serving half of his sentence of more than three years for the possession and distribution of extremist material. He was under active police surveillance.

Yet much of the press coverage of this “terrorist” suggested he was a mass killer who any sensible person

The Tories and the right always use attacks to call for more powers for the cops

● The stabbings in south London come after an attack on London Bridge last year

● After that attack, home secretary Priti Patel called for an end to prisoners’ early release

● And after the Westminster attack in 2017 Tories called for more powers to access and read private WhatsApp messages

would lock up for life. But longer prison sentences won’t prevent terrorist attacks.

Prisons do not prevent crime and they do not rehabilitate. They don’t even work in their own terms.

Haleema Faraz Khan, Amman’s mother, told Sky News that she believed he had been radicalised while in high-security jail Belmarsh.

London mayor Sadiq Khan managed both to condemn Amman’s release and to criticise prison. “Prisons are warehouses where people are radicalised more or learn more things from a university of crime rather than being rehabilitated and punished,” he said.

The sort of announcements from Johnson are part of a law and order campaign with serious consequences for democratic rights.

Long minimum sentences will do nothing to deal with the roots of terror attacks—for example, in the wars carried out by the British and US governments. Since the launch of the “war on terror” there have been constant new restrictions of rights. They were all ineffective.

Now Johnson’s measures will be used to clear the way for harsher sentencing in other areas.

On other pages...

Don’t value migrants just for their productivity >>Page 15



A PLAIN clothes cop guns down Sudesh Amman

Shooting was cold-blooded execution

THE SHOOTING down of Sudesh Amman in Streatham on Sunday is another example of street executions carried out by the police.

Amman was gunned down by officers who were “actively monitoring him at close range”. It was revealed that the pistols used to kill him are routinely carried by officers involved in such monitoring.

This means there are dozens of armed plain clothes officers wandering the streets. And they clearly feel they can shoot people who they deem to be a danger.

Mobile phone footage of the incident showed a number of police officers wearing plain clothes arriving on the scene at high speed, firing about five gunshots and killing Amman.

Usman Khan was shot when he carried



Not keeping us safe

out an attack on London Bridge in November last year. He was also being closely monitored by the police.

Politicians lined up to praise the police force for their handling of the incident, and to defend their right to shoot down suspects.

But this is the same attitude that led police to murder the wholly innocent Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes. He was shot on the tube by plain clothes police officers in 2005, also in south London.

One police officer held him down while two others fired seven hollow tip bullets into his head and one into his neck. Three other bullets missed.

Jean Charles had left his block of flats in Tulse Hill that morning. Surveillance officers, including some from military intelligence,

were watching the flats, looking for alleged terrorists.

The firearms officer who fired the fatal shots said he was prepared to tackle terrorists who were intent on “mass murder”.

He said Jean Charles’ behaviour had been “in keeping with a man acting suspiciously, with being a potential suicide bomber”.

On the afternoon of the shooting, Evening Standard newsboards announced that a “bomber” had been shot dead on London’s tube.

In fact the police released “incorrect information,” as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) politely put it.

Jean Charles’ killing rightly led many people to question the right of the police to shoot down suspects.

Everyone—particularly Muslims and black people—should be scared.

And we should all oppose arming the police.

IN BRIEF

Protest after attack on two Edinburgh shopkeepers

by HECTOR SIERRA

ANTI-RACISTS rallied in Edinburgh last Thursday after an assault on two Asian shopkeepers. Around 50 people joined the Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) protest.

A group of 20 people, armed with crowbars and a knife, had physically assaulted Nadeem and Mudassar Akbar last month.

Nadeem, who joined the protest, told Socialist Worker he appreciated the public response.

“I encourage everyone who faces a racist attack to come out in this way and protest against it,” he said.

Ahmed, a friend of the Akbars, told Socialist Worker that the assault wasn’t a one-off incident.

“It happens everywhere all the time, but it goes unreported,” he



SOME OF the protesters in Edinburgh

said. “The police are less likely to take it seriously and respond quickly when it is people like us phoning them.”

The protest was joined by trade unionists, campaigners and politicians, including from Labour and the Scottish National Party (SNP).

Edinburgh SNP MP Tommy Sheppard celebrated the area’s anti-racist record, but warned, “We need to

do all those things again”.

SUTR national demonstrations in Glasgow and London on 21 March will be an opportunity to turn the tide against the politicians and press giving the racists confidence.

Go to standuptoracism.org.uk for details of 21 March demonstrations.

Go to **Turning The Tide Against Racism Conference** on Facebook for details of the SUTR Scotland conference in Glasgow on 22 February.

Racist writing’s on the wall

PEOPLE protested in south east London on Sunday in response to antisemitic graffiti that appeared in Blackheath and Charlton.

Speakers at the Batley Park protest included Labour politicians and Harold Wilson of organisers

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR).

Labour councillor Ann-Marie Cousins said, “We are out in broad daylight standing up in solidarity against racist behaviour. Whereas the people who did this snuck out in the cover of the night.”

Meanwhile, around 50 people joined protest in solidarity with migrants in Norwich on Sunday.

SUTR called the protest after a racist poster was put up in the Winchester Tower block telling people to speak English or move out.

Outrage after homophobic assault in Chelmsford

A MAN in Chelmsford, Essex, suffered a brutal homophobic assault on Sunday of last week.

Lee Brobson was on a night out with two friends, Dan and Clark, in Chelmsford when the attack happened.

He told Socialist Worker, “Dan and Clark were holding hands as we walked down the street.

“There were two guys outside the fish and chip shop and we

noticed that they were staring at us.

Clark said, ‘Hello’, as in to say, ‘what are you staring at’ and they came charging over, pushed Dan and swung for him.”

Lee was badly beaten and hospitalised after he jumped in to help his friends.

The Chelmsford attack comes amid a rise in hate crime against LGBT+ people.

“It’s not all

rainbows for the LGBT community,” said Lee.

“Attacks might not be a day to day thing, but we still have the experience, whether it’s cat calling or discrimination.

Lee said Boris Johnson’s premiership meant “right wingers feel they’ve got the country now”.

He added that people had to spread the word and push back against bigotry. **Tomás Tengely-Evans**

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

BUILD RESISTANCE AFTER TORY CLIMATE COP OUTS

BORIS JOHNSON has unveiled the Tories’ “strategy” in hosting the United Nations (UN) Cop 26 climate talks in November.

He said the government would bring forward the deadline for the phase-out of diesel and petrol cars to 2035. Even the new target is five years later than the final date the UN says we can avert the worst-case climate catastrophe.

Johnson also announced plans to encourage other countries to match his government’s promise to slash carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

And that’s two decades beyond the 2030 deadline.

Johnson is twiddling his thumbs and beset by Tory infighting.

Former Tory minister Claire O’Neill—who Johnson sacked as Cop 26 president last week—launched a stinging attack on the prime minister.

She said Britain was “miles off track” in meeting previous Cop agreements.

None of this will come as a surprise to anyone following the failures of governments to implement serious climate action. The Cop talks in November

aren’t irrelevant. It could see negotiators set more ambitious targets than the non-binding decisions reached at the Paris talks five years ago.

But vague assurances, slightly tweaked deadlines and replacing one Tory climate denier for another does nothing to address the reality of what we are facing.

Climate catastrophe is so dramatic it is already taking lives in the poorest parts of the globe.

The full nature of the crisis hasn’t been felt yet across Britain. But by the time 10 Downing Street wakes up—if it ever does—it will be too late.

Johnson has no intention of delivering the kind of action

By the time Number 10 wakes up—if it ever does—it will be too late us

BE SCARED—INTO ACTION

FEAR AND anger are powerful emotions.

That’s why right wingers try to manipulate them whether over terrorism or the coronavirus.

The correct response to coronavirus is to recognise that it’s a serious potential threat.

But the worst reaction is to turn on scapegoats or to fuel hatred.

By Tuesday morning the virus had killed at least 426 people.

That exceeds the deaths in China from the Sars virus

outbreak of 2002-03 which killed nearly 800 people globally. The threat won’t be dealt with by seeking to identify culprits among ordinary people.

Racist attacks have doubled in the last five years.

Much of that is the result of politicians and the media whipping up feelings against Muslims and migrants.

We don’t need more of that. They key issue is to direct our anger at the right targets—the ruling class and the politicians who

needed to deal with climate change. For him, profit comes before any other considerations.

The timescale for real action is months and years—not decades. We have to act now, and the prevarications of the climate deniers and delayers at the top of society doesn’t bring climate justice any closer.

This battle is too urgent and too vital to play by their rules. It’s not only a question of life or death, but a matter of what kind of planet we are going to have left.

The school climate strikes movement and Extinction Rebellion mobilisations are important. They serve as an inspirational example of how movements can take on the rich and powerful.

Join the school strikes on the 14 February and the Extinction Rebellion demonstration in London on 22 February.

It’s important to march and fight for the planet.

It is crucial to be part of building the kind of mass resistance we need to fight for a habitable world. Johnson and his ilk have their power.

We build our own forces and take him on. Join the resistance.

Stand Up To Racism

● Trade union conference
Sat 8 Feb, 11am, Soas, London WC1H

● March against racism
Sat 21 March, London and Glasgow



standuptoracism.org.uk



Cops in Streatham after the stabbings

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



The left must move on from Brexit splits

"I HAVE taken great care not to deride, bewail, or execrate human actions, but to understand them," the great philosopher Baruch Spinoza wrote in the Introduction to his Political Treatise, unfinished when he died in 1677.

This seems the best attitude to take towards Britain's departure from the European Union (EU), which began on Friday last week but won't really finish till the end of the year.

Brexit hasn't just polarised British society and, for a while, paralysed the political system. It has deeply divided the left.

These divisions continue. On social media you can find left Remainers blaming Brexit on what was largely the phantom of Lexit—the regrettably small and weak anti-capitalist opposition to the EU. You can also find supporters of Lexit blaming Remainers for Labour's defeat.

I have my own very definite opinions on the issues both sides are abusing each other about. But these arguments seem to me largely beside the point now. The most important thing about the protracted political struggle since the June 2016 referendum is the outcome.

Boris Johnson won. It's worth underlining this, because a lot of people underestimated Johnson, myself included. He proved himself to be more than just a bumbling opportunist with a long history of expressing repellent views.

He used the Brexit impasse to seize the premiership and then manoeuvred the opposition parties into an election that he won handsomely by promising obsessively to "get Brexit done".

Thanks to this Britain has perhaps the most right wing Tory government ever. The old pro-European "wets" who held Margaret Thatcher back and eventually forced her out have been purged. And, by refusing to remain aligned with the EU's regime of trade regulation, this government is going for a much harder version of Brexit than was ever envisaged under Theresa May.

There has been a lot of talk that Johnson would soon unveil his commitment to a much softer version of "One Nation Conservatism".

Ordered

But last week the Financial Times reported that Johnson and his chancellor of the exchequer, Sajid Javid, have ordered cabinet ministers to cut their budgets by 5 percent. So austerity isn't over after all. These plans may be designed to free up cash to deal with a disruptive exit from the EU single market.

So this is the immediate future. What this means is that all sections of the left have suffered a defeat. Those who campaigned for a second referendum to reverse Brexit have lost. But so too have those of us—including Jeremy Corbyn when his party let him—who argued for a progressive break with the EU. The people who are likely to pay are the same working class people who have already suffered grievously during the past ten years of Tory rule.

We can and will recover from this defeat. We have suffered far worse ones. By breaking loose from the EU, Johnson is pursuing a risky course at a time of growing economic and geopolitical instability. His luck will run out, maybe quite soon.

Recovery requires careful and sober thinking. We need to understand better why we lost. In particular, why were the Tory right able to see off the most left wing leadership that Labour has ever had? Brexit was important in this, but to understand why some Labour Leave seats tilted towards the Tories we need to dig deeper and further back in time.

But this isn't an exercise in academic history. We have to fight to hold back the Tories and the racists—and all this against the horizon of accelerating climate chaos. On all these issues there is far more that unites the different fragments of the left than divides us.

I'm not saying we should just hold hands and sing Kumbaya. Understanding what went wrong and mapping out a strategy for the future inevitably involves disagreement and debate, perhaps particularly over Labour's future course. Clarity comes through argument and the struggle of tendencies, not consensus.

But the blame game is becoming a tedious and repetitive waste of energy. It's time to move on and prepare for the very tough battles that lie ahead of us.

No-cuts pledge in Liverpool reopens debates for Labour

by NICK CLARK

A LABOUR Party mayor has said his council will refuse to implement any more cuts—raising the prospect of a fight with the Tory government.

Liverpool mayor Joe Anderson—not a left winger—said last week, "I will refuse to make any further cuts to our budget because we are now at the stage where doing so will mean closing down vital services."

He added, "This will put us on a collision course with the government."

Anderson spoke out after the Local Government Association predicted that the Tories' council funding formula would force a £27 million cut to Liverpool's budget.

The Tories have already cut £436 million from Liverpool's funding since 2010.

If councils refuse to set "legal" or "balanced" budgets, the government can send administrators to take over the council.

Councils and union leaders would then have to step up the resistance, or accept cuts.

The announcement has sparked debates.

Candidate

At a meeting for Labour deputy leadership candidate Richard Burgon in Haringey on Monday, councillor Mike Hakata said councils had to make cuts.

The north London council was hailed as a "left" council after activists replaced several right wing Labour councillors in 2018.

Yet Hakata said it was "pretty much accepted" among all the Labour



ALL LABOUR councils have implemented cuts (above). Richard Burgon (left) hasn't called for no-cuts budgets

they wouldn't have enough commissioners to send in to every single council."

Burgon didn't call for councils to pass no-cuts budgets.

He presented himself as the best deputy leadership candidate to defend the legacy of Jeremy Corbyn.

Yet left activists worry that party members are pulled by the argument that the next leader must be more right wing to win elections.

Party nominations and some polls suggest the right wing Keir Starmer has more support among members than left leadership candidate Rebecca Long-Bailey.

And Burgon is lagging behind the more right wing deputy leader candidate Angela Rayner.

Haringey councillor Emina Ibrahim said that "people who without a doubt would have backed Jeremy Corbyn" were considering backing candidates to his right.

And one activist, James, told Socialist Worker, "We hear that people who voted Corbyn in 2015 and 2016 might be swayed to Keir Starmer. He's the more establishment candidate—the man in the suit."

Right wing arguments about "electability" and running councils "responsibly" are pulling Labour to the right.

councillors that they couldn't refuse to pass on cuts.

He even said that rules on which services are "statutory" meant the council had to cut services such as adult social care.

Yet some Labour activists in the room said the cuts could be resisted.

One argued, "If all the Labour councils together passed illegal budgets,

Scandal of soaring prison self-harm

"SELF-HARM" IN prisons has reached a record high of over 60,000 incidents in a year, official figures revealed last week.

There are more prisoners harming themselves more often.

According to the Ministry of Justice there were 61,461 incidents in the 12 months to September, up 16 percent from the previous period.

This is the highest number since records began in 2009.

The number of inmates self-harming also hit a record high of 12,740.



And the number of self-harm incidents per individual rose by 14 percent from 4.2 to 4.8.

Separate figures also published last week showed the number of self-harm incidents in youth custody rose by 3 percent in the year to March.

Deborah Coles, director of the Inquest charity, said the figures are a "national scandal" that reflect "the despair and neglect in prisons".

"Prioritising prison building and punitive policies will only do more harm," she said.

FIGURE IT OUT

16 percent—the rise in self-harm incidents in jails in the year to September

14 percent—the rise in the number of self-harm incidents per individual over the same period

3 percent—the rise in the number of self-harm incidents in youth custody

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Students in York won't be split by virus panic

As coronavirus arrives in Britain, students are challenging racist explanations for the infection

STUDENTS IN York are taking action against any rise in racism on campus after the first British cases of coronavirus infection were revealed to be from their university.

"We've got a large number of Chinese students here and even before the outbreak I think there was a 'them and us' atmosphere at college," third year student Isabel told Socialist Worker.

"There some stuff on social media that's quite alarming, telling students to stay away from students wearing face masks, and the like.

"The university authorities are saying the right sort of things, but the message from the mass media does mean some students are very scared."

Isabel said that the separation of Chinese students on campus has been encouraged by university authorities over a number of years.

"Some students think of Chinese students as 'others', and the university plays on that feeling," she said.

"They treat them as a major source of revenue. The most expensive accommodation on campus is aimed at them, their courses are in a particular part of the campus and they have separate canteens."

Martha, who also studies at York, said that anti-racists on campus have work to do.

Myths

"We plan to run stalls," she said. "We have to do a lot of basic explaining to undermine the myths about, for example, why Chinese students wear surgical face masks on campus. It doesn't mean they are potential carriers of the virus.

"We also want to reach out to students from East Asia."

The biggest danger in the face of a developing virus is the spread of panic. Fear makes people reluctant to come forward if they have symptoms, and institutional fear drives managers to cover up cases in a bid to avoid reputational damage.

There is increasing evidence that when the new strain of the

BACK STORY

Coronavirus originated in Wuhan, China, in late December

● There are currently more than 17,000 confirmed cases across the globe

● There were two confirmed cases in Britain as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday

● Many countries have shut their borders to anyone arriving from China

● Millions of people in Wuhan face repression as they're forced to stay in the city

coronavirus first emerged at the end of last year, officials in China were so desperate to avoid negative publicity that they jailed those that openly discussed it.

In early January, eight people from Wuhan were punished for "publishing or forwarding false information on the internet without verification".

Those arrested had posted on Weibo, a Facebook-like social media stream in China, saying that Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or Sars, was back.

Sars severely affected China in 2003, and spread globally with 800 deaths. The disease hit China's reputation as it became clear that unsanitary conditions in hospitals were one of the main reasons why it spread.

Fear that an outbreak of a new respiratory virus would again damage people's confidence in the Wuhan's political leadership combined with Chinese state fears that it could create economic instability and damage the superpower's global image.

As a consequence vital chances to isolate the disease at an early stage were lost.



On other pages...

The woman who's taking Universal Credit to court >>>Page 17

PEOPLE ARE being tested for the virus around the world

Building movements to defend the planet from the climate catastrophe

IT'S NOT just the planet that's hotting up—action to defend it is also ramping up a gear.

The Tories announced this week their "strategy" for November's Cop26 climate talks in Glasgow.

But even that was beset by government infighting and chaos, as Boris Johnson sacked Claire O'Neill—the president of Cop26.

O'Neill was due to lead the British intervention in Glasgow but now she's due to be replaced with a minister. Whichever Tory is overseeing the talks—they will be met with resistance.

Mobilising

In Glasgow, around 150 activists from across Scotland gathered last Saturday for a "mobilising meeting" focusing on organising the fightback for Cop26.

It drew together activists from Extinction Rebellion (XR), universities, Scottish Youth Climate Strike, workers from six unions and Friends of the Earth.

Lewis Nielsen from the Campaign against Climate Change steering group said Cop26 could produce "the biggest mobilisation for the climate that Scotland has ever seen".

He argued that everyone needed "to try and go as big as we possibly can". Activists heard from youth strikers, and discussed how to support the upcoming school students' strike in February

They also discussed how to campaign to demand free public transport and how to mobilise a climate justice bloc on the Stand Up To Racism demonstration in Glasgow on 21 March.

School students across Britain are set to take to the streets on Friday next week in the latest phase of climate strikes

UK Schools Climate Network (UKSCN) London said, "It's been a year of lots of talk but very little actual action. When people are already dying we can't afford to call talking 'progress'. Join us on the 14 February."

The strike is coordinated by the UKSCN, which has four demands.

It's calling on the government to implement a Green New Deal and "communicate the severity of the ecological crisis".

The UKSCN is also demanding that schools teach young people about the climate catastrophe. A fourth demand, to implement proportional representation in

elections and reduce the voting age to 16, was added recently in response to the general election.

And activists are buoyed by the news that XR has called for a mass demonstration.

Planned for Saturday 22 February, the direct action group said, "We are thousands of ordinary people who care. Together we will put out the fire."

For more on the XR mobilisation go to bit.ly/XRFire
For more climate justice summits visit bit.ly/CACCEvents

SCHOOL CLIMATE STRIKES

Friday 14 February

Friday 13 March

Organise actions in your workplace or school

See ukscn.org/events for a strike near you





Iowa vote launches Democrats into chaos

Bernie Sanders is proving to be a challenge to the Democratic Party establishment, says **Gabby Thorpe**

IF EARLY indications were true, the vote in Iowa to choose the Democratic candidate for US president was a bitter blow for establishment favourite Joe Biden.

Full results were delayed by chaotic procedural problem and had not been announced when Socialist Worker went to press.

Former vice president Biden is the choice of most of the Democratic establishment. But his campaign seems in trouble.

Early signs pointed to big votes for democratic socialist Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg. Both candidates released internal campaign data that claimed victory.

Buttigieg plays on his relative youth and the fact he would be the first openly gay presidential candidate. But he is thoroughgoing neoliberal with strong corporate backing. And his background is in naval intelligence in Afghanistan.

Success for Sanders will be an embarrassment for the Democrat leadership. They have repeatedly used smears to try and discredit his campaign.

But his policies on free health-care and education, and workers' rights have offered an alternative to Trump.

US UPDATE

The next US presidential election is scheduled for 3 November this year

● It will decide who will take on Donald Trump for the Democratic Party

● Each of the main parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, choose their candidate through a long process of primaries and caucuses

● This process begins in Iowa on 3 February and goes on until June

● Primaries and caucuses are where the voters in a particular state say who they want to be the candidate

● Fourteen states vote on 3 March—a critical moment for the campaign

The Iowa vote came ahead of Trump's state of the union address on Tuesday night and his impeachment vote in the senate on Wednesday.

According to his administration, Trump was expected to use the address to "celebrate American economic and military strength and present an optimistic vision of America's future". He is promoting what he calls the "great American comeback".

In reality this means bragging about attacks on migrants and toasting corporate success. And the "optimistic vision" of the future is likely to bring more of the same—and worse.

Trump seemed certain to be acquitted by the senate on Wednesday. A majority of 67—two thirds of the senate—would be required to remove Trump from office.

The support for Sanders is a sign of the widespread hunger for change in the US. It needs to be turned into action—not lined up behind the Democrats.

Whatever the result, a mass

A TENSE night during the primary in Iowa

Irish elections set to show long term shift away from three main parties

IRISH TAOISEACH (prime minister) Leo Varadkar was hoping to get an easy ride to re-election this week.

He hoped the mess the British government had made of Brexit would make him appear statesman like.

All indications are he was wrong.

Brexit hasn't featured in the campaign, rather anger over health, housing and to some extent the environment.

Sinn Féin was the biggest party in one opinion poll.

The repeated experience of junior coalition parties—Green and Labour—being trounced after a spell in government may discourage Sinn Féin from rushing to be in a coalition even if it is possible.

It wants to join the establishment but is under pressure from its working class supporters not to.

It has refused to rule out a coalition with the bosses' parties.

Fine Gael, Varadkar's party, is battling with Fianna Fáil over a declining share of the vote.

These two bosses' parties have alternated in office. After being

the natural party of government for most of the history of the Irish state, Fianna Fáil was decimated in 2011 for implementing European Union austerity.

Fine Gael has spent the past nine years presiding over a deepening housing crisis, with record levels of homelessness and the return of mass emigration as living standards dropped.

The Labour Party is still being punished for being in a coalition government for the first half of the last decade.

Shift

This all reflects a long term, important shift in Irish politics. Just over three decades ago the three main parties received 94 percent of the vote.

In the 2007 election the combined popular vote for Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and Labour was 79 percent.

In 2016 it was just over half. It is set to fall again.

This has been combined with the mass movements that led to the legalisation of abortion and other liberalisations.

A grand coalition between the bosses' parties is possible,

but unlikely. A number of independents kept the last government going on an ad hoc basis. Sinn Féin has tacked left in the south in recent years.

But in Northern Ireland it oversaw austerity measures as part of the assembly.

In contrast the Solidarity-People Before Profit TD (MP) said this election an "historic opportunity".

Richard Boyd Barrett People Before Profit TD (MP) said this week that Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael "have had their 100 years running the state".

"They've left us with a mess in the most basic things, housing, health, the cost of living, the climate," he said.

"The polls are showing—and I think the trend is showing—that more than 50 percent of people are looking for something different.

"When we do come together—as we have done on a number of campaigns—we have been very, very effective.

"I would appeal to all of the left—including some of the radical left—to build a united front that offers people a genuine alternative."

Simon Basketter

Religious leave stays

EALING COUNCIL, in west London, has informed head teachers that they intend to keep paid religious leave of up to three days per year for all teachers.

It was Ealing head teachers who asked for this “review” with the aim of taking away this right.

This decision also means that the possible threat of losing up to five days paid leave for a sick child or close relative has been removed.

The NEU union legal opinion was that education workers would have a strong claim under the 2010 Equalities Act. It was accepted by many members that the removal of religious leave would be a racist cut if applied.

The union votes on the matter were unanimous.

This victory shows that we can stand up to the attacks we should anticipate from the government and Boris Johnson’s racist agenda.

Stefan Simms
Ealing NEU

Court farce for Rebels

I WAS happy to see charges against Extinction Rebellion (XR) activists were dismissed after a police officer witness went on holiday.

It shows how farcical the initial charging was. But XR can expect to face harsh charges in the future, especially as the climate justice movement grows.

Molly Doherty
Manchester

Grants come too late for health students

I AM a third year occupational therapy student who started university in 2017.

That was the year that the NHS student bursaries were taken away, and tuition fees were introduced.

Now I and my fellow students are finishing our course and the government have decided to reinstate maintenance grants.

This is obviously good news for future NHS students, but my fellow students are annoyed that



Media racism exposed in coverage of coronavirus

PANIC AROUND the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan has led to a rise in racist attacks against Chinese and East Asian people.

Many will have seen the Evening Standard’s extremely distasteful cartoon of a rat with a face mask—alluding to 2020 being the year of the rat. This is just one example.

Much of the right wing media latched onto the idea that the virus started in Huanan Seafood Market, known for its trade in wild animals.

After scientists reported that the virus was likely to have originated in bats, a video of a Chinese woman eating bat soup went viral.

Commentators on Twitter used it as evidence of Chinese people’s “dirty” eating habits.

The theory about Huanan Market has now been disproved.

Yet the vile comments persist.

They build on a history of racist portrayals of East Asian diets based on false information and arbitrary judgements on what kind of meat is “acceptable”.

Food safety standards are a concern in China—as in much of the world.

But it is not ordinary people’s tastes that are to blame.

It’s government failure to regulate the industry.

The racism hasn’t stayed

online. Chinese people—and those with East Asian appearance—around the world have spoken out about being targeted on public transport.

Passengers told a woman to get off the Metro in Paris, while university student Sam Phan wrote in the Guardian newspaper that people had been avoiding sitting next to him on the bus.

Those on the right are calling for stricter border controls against Chinese people.

It is crucial that we stand in solidarity with all those affected by the virus and condemn the racism that seeks to divide us.

Ruby James
Central London

Expose the BBC bias against the left

A CAMPAIGN is growing against the BBC’s “anti-left wing bias”, particularly its coverage of the 2019 general election.

During election campaigns, the mountains that Labour had to climb to win power because of a viciously pro-capitalist press became more akin to mountain ranges.

There are currently a number of initiatives taking on and exposing BBC bias.

First, a petition challenging the BBC’s

BBC doc showed anti-left bias

anti-Corbyn bias has reached an impressive 24,000 signatories.

We need to get 25,000 so we can move to the next phase of our campaign.

Second, a

crowd-funding campaign has been set up to take Ofcom to court for refusing to investigate last year’s flagrantly anti-Labour BBC Panorama programme on antisemitism.

We need to take this issue to the courts so we leave the BBC nowhere to hide when its disgraceful and systematic bias is exposed.

This is particularly true on the antisemitism issue and on its anti-left bias more generally.

Dr Richard House
Stroud, Wiltshire

Just a thought...

Question for monarchists

I’D JUST like to ask monarchists why they support a woman—the queen—who shows contempt for the feelings of her people, even those of her supporters.

Will Counsel
Cambridgeshire

HS2 is not worth it

WE SHOULD not continue building the HS2 railway.

We’re better off electrifying existing services and buying new rolling stock.

Alam Bray
On Facebook

One state is the only way

THE TWO State solution is dead, Israel-Palestine needs to be one secular state with civil rights for all.

Get Trump’s hands off Palestine.

@breiddalurblom
On Twitter

LGBT+ deserve more

I WAS shocked to hear that Caroline Nokes, an MP who voted against same-sex marriage, has been appointed to parliament’s Women’s and Equalities committee.

Surely the only qualification for the post is don’t be a homophobe.

Emily
Norwich

No tears on Brexit day

EUROPEAN Union (EU) sanctions have resulted in the deaths of refugees and migrants who have tried to cross it’s borders.

I don’t like the thought of a Tory Brexit. But I didn’t mourn leaving the racist neoliberal EU last month.

Jamie
Glasgow

Fire disaster still a scandal

GRENFELL profiteers should be put in the dock defending murder charges.

Ian McGeorge
On Facebook

NO ‘PEACE OR PROSPERITY’ IN PALESTINE

US president Donald Trump unveiled his ‘deal of the century’ for peace in Palestine last week. His plan will entrench occupation and leave Israel in charge, writes Nick Clark

OCCUPATION rebranded as “peace and prosperity” is what every US and Israeli government has wanted for Palestinians for decades. But only Donald Trump has the brass neck to come out and say it.

Trump’s much-touted “deal of the century”—the supposed peace deal released last week—begins with a lofty sense of promise to the Palestinians. “Palestinians have aspirations that have not been realised, including self-determination, improvement of their standard of living, social betterment, and a respected place in the region,” it says. What it promises is a tiny, fragmented scrap of land over which Palestinians have no real political control. It will be surrounded by a heavily armed Israeli state.

Trump says each side has to make “sacrifices”. Israel’s “sacrifice” is to give up some of the Palestinian land it stole 53 years ago in the Six-Day War of 1967—though not all of it. “The State of Israel and the United States do not believe the State of Israel is legally bound to provide the Palestinians with 100 percent of pre-1967 territory,” says Trump’s plan.

That means Israel keeps the vast majority of settlements—in which more than 700,000 Israelis squat on Palestinian land—built since then. Meanwhile the Palestinians have

Gaza
GAZA IS a big, weltering sore at the heart of Trump’s plan. The deal can only go ahead if the group that rules the Gaza Strip—Hamas—is either removed or agrees to give up its arms. How can this be achieved? An election? Or war? The last time Palestinians had an election in 2006, Hamas won because it offered resistance. Then, as now, the US and Israel decided they couldn’t accept that—so engineered a bloody coup attempt to try and overthrow it. When that failed, Israel imposed its siege on Gaza. Even if Hamas agreed to another election, there’s no guarantee that the US or Israel would accept its outcome. Trump’s plan says, “It is up to the Palestinian people to make clear that they reject the ideologies of destruction, terror and conflict.” The message is—elect someone we like, or be punished.

Jerusalem
ISRAEL HOPES this will be the final nail in the coffin for Palestinian presence in Jerusalem. The plan makes concrete Trump’s 2017 announcement that all of Jerusalem should be Israel’s capital. Palestine’s capital will be pushed to towns on the outskirts of Jerusalem. That’s hugely significant. It means the loss of the control of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where tens of thousands of people travel to pray. It also heralds an end to Palestinian life in the city they’ve fought to cling on to.

bridges. **Tunnel** A similar tunnel would connect West Bank land to the Gaza Strip—provided Palestinians are allowed the Gaza Strip (see left). Israeli border guards would control every crossing in and out of Palestinian land. Nastier still, Israel would keep complete military control over the entire land, sea and air. This Palestinian state won’t be allowed its own military. And Israel will be allowed to “engage in the necessary security measures”—invade, bomb, assassinate—to keep Palestine “demilitarised and non-threatening”. Palestine won’t even have the right to join any international body without Israel’s say-so. And all cases against Israel and the US in the International Criminal Court have to be dropped before negotiations can begin. Palestinians are left with no real political control. But they should really be grateful for Israel’s permanent military occupation. “Every country spends a very significant sum of money on its defence,” says the plan. “The State of Palestine will not be burdened with such cost.” This “solution” believes Israel is entitled to any part of Palestine it wants and that the Palestinians—simply by existing—are a threat. So despite having no army, Palestinians are lectured about the need to “demilitarise” their society, stop “glorifying” violence and teaching “hatred” in schools. Meanwhile Israel—a society built around its military, where teenagers are conscripted into the violent, occupying army—is left in charge.



The maps in the graphic above show how Palestinian land (in light blue) increasingly was overtaken by Israeli settlers (light brown) until today when all that remains of Palestine are small areas hemmed in by the Israeli state

TRUMP’S MAP (right) shows how he envisages a future Palestinian state—disjointed, heavily guarded and hemmed in on all sides



A plot to shore up US dominance across the Middle East

THIS IS not, as the plan says, a “fair compromise”, let alone justice or freedom for the Palestinians. But the plan isn’t about fairness, justice or freedom. It’s about shoring up US dominance in the Middle East—by prioritising the military strength of its key ally. Israel can hang on to the Jordan Valley because keeping soldiers there is “critical for Israel’s national security”. The same goes for having total control over West Bank airspace. If Israel left the Jordan Valley, the plan says it would have “significant implications for regional security in the Middle East”. That’s the US’s way of saying it would threaten its interests—especially in the face of its growing regional rival, Iran. As Iran’s power grows, Trump desperately wants to unite Israel with rulers of powerful Arab states—especially Saudi Arabia—militarily and economically. Arab rulers want this too. But Palestine stands in their way. Support for the Palestinians runs deep among ordinary people across the Middle East. Their rulers fear that anything that looks like a betrayal of Palestine could spark protests, revolt and upheaval. “Arab countries in the region have been held hostage to this conflict,” says the plan. “The goal of this Vision is to have the Arab states fully cooperate with the State of Israel.” Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, Saudi Arabia’s ruler, has already backed the plan. If it is implemented, Palestinians will once more be trampled on by Israel and betrayed by Arab leaders in the interests of Western imperialism. Middle Eastern leaders often give rhetorical support to the Palestinians. But they have always sold out the Palestinian struggle and accommodated to Western imperialism. **Fundamentally** It’s been that way ever since the British Empire decided to back the Zionist movement—settlers who moved to Palestine to establish an exclusively Jewish state—in 1917. Those settlers helped the British Empire keep control of Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century. In the same way, Israel helped the US dominate the Middle East from the second half onwards. Israel was founded on a premise—Zionism—that is fundamentally about excluding Palestinians from their land.

Palestinian resistance is a touchstone with millions across the Middle East and beyond

Refugees “THERE SHALL be no right of return by, or absorption of, any Palestinian refugee into Israel.” With that sentence, the US and Israel hope to do away with an issue that’s lain at the heart of Palestinian struggle ever since they were expelled in 1948. There can be no justice for the Palestinians until they are allowed to return. But the deal wants to do away with the very definition of Palestinian refugee. Anyone born to parents expelled from Israel in 1948 will no longer be considered one. Most disgustingly, Israel is absolved of any guilt at all. The plight of the refugees is the fault of Arab countries that have refused to absorb them, not the state that expelled them in the first place. **Jobs blueprint will help Israel** A BIG chunk of Trump’s plan is a blueprint for “economic growth”. It promises to “create over one million Palestinian jobs,” “reduce the Palestinian poverty rate by 50 percent” and the Palestinian unemployment rate “to nearly single digits”. There are even neat little graphs to prove it. How can this be done? Through privatisation, low taxes and opening up Palestine to multinationals. Meanwhile, “state-of-the-art industrial zones” will supposedly create jobs. This is a continuation of the economic plundering of Palestine that began after the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993—and made life for ordinary Palestinians worse. **Control** For years, industrial zones on Palestinian land under full Israeli military control have been held up as the future for “economic peace”. Really, they’re places where Israeli and Western businesses can exploit cheap Palestinian labour and special exemptions on tax. Since 1993 “investment”—mostly through loans—has allowed Western multinationals to flood into Palestine’s economy. But while a handful of Palestinians at the top of society got rich, poverty and unemployment went up. And this privatisation and investment tied the Palestinian economy to Israel and the West’s. That compounded the basic problem at the root of Palestinians’ poverty—the occupation that strangles the economy. Trump’s plan is a recipe for more of the same.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

BOLTON

Get Trump's hands off Palestine

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate),
BL1 1DY

CREWE & STOKE-ON-TRENT

Booklaunch—System Change Not Climate Change

Thu 12 Mar, 7.15pm,
Royal Voluntary Service,
29 Charles St,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3JP

DERBY

Booklaunch—System Change Not Climate Change

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next
to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

LUTON & ST ALBANS

Booklaunch—System Change Not Climate Change

Thu 20 Feb, 7.30pm,
Stockwood Hotel,
41-43 Stockwood Cres
(enter via London Rd car park),
Luton, LU1 3SS

OXFORD

Fifty years since the women's liberation movement—struggles, gains and frustration

Thu 20 Feb, 7pm,
Oxford Town Hall,
St Aldate's,
OX1 1BX

PORTSMOUTH

Revolt in France—how workers can fight back

Wed 19 Feb, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Fake news and bias—who controls the media?

Mon 10 Feb, 6pm,
The Snug,
Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BARNLEY

Sexism and the system

Thu 13 Feb, 6.30pm,
Room 302, The Civic,
Hanson St,
S70 2HZ

BIRMINGHAM

Too many people? Climate change and the myth of overpopulation

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
The Church at Carrs Lane,
Carrs Ln, B4 7SX

SOCIALIST WORKER BOOKLAUNCHES WITH AUTHOR LAURA MILES

BRISTOL

Thu 13 Feb, 7.30pm,
YHA,
14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

GREATER MANCHESTER

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

LIVERPOOL

Wed 19 Feb, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Ln,
L1 3BT

SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Thu 20 Feb, 7pm,
Central United
Reform Church,
60 Norfolk St,
S1 2JB

SWANSEA

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Elysium Gallery & Bar,
210 High St,
SA1 1PE

BRADFORD

Can there be a progressive patriotism?

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
Bread + Roses,
14 North Parade, BD1 3HT

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Antisemitism and the far right today

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St, BB11 1NR

CARDIFF

Rosa Luxemburg—a revolutionary for today

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Tce, CF24 4HX

CHESTERFIELD

Why is capitalism addicted to plastic?

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

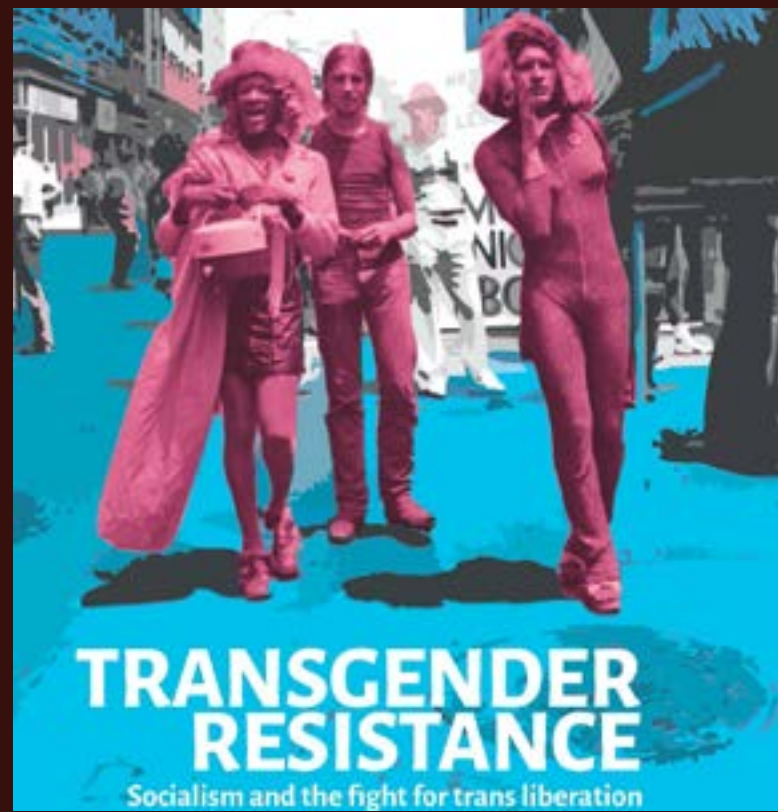
Are we entering a new age of global revolt?

Thu 27 Feb, 8pm,
Oyster Room, Hythe
Community Centre,
1 Ventura Dr, CO1 2FG

DUDLEY

Refugees welcome! Why we say no borders

Wed 12 Feb, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St,
Stourbridge, DY8 1EP



DUNDEE

What do we mean by democracy?

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
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EDINBURGH

Revolt in France—how workers can fight back

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

GLASGOW

Can there be a progressive patriotism?

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
Avant Garde,
33-44 King St,
Merchant City,
G1 5QT

HARLOW

Is the media all powerful?

Thu 13 Feb, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
CM18 6BX

HUDDERSFIELD

75 years after Auschwitz—the nature of antisemitism today

Wed 12 Feb, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Pde
(near both train and
bus stations),
HD1 5JP

KENT

Fake news and bias—who controls the media?

Thu 13 Feb, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre
(Conference Room),
272 High St,
Chatham, ME4 4BP

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Does unconscious bias explain racism?

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Ln,
LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Sex and sexuality in the era of Love Island

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Sqr,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: HACKNEY

Too many people? Climate change and the myth of overpopulation

Thu 13 Feb, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd, E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

What would a socialist society look like?

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd
(corner Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Can there be a socialist in the White House?

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
Elizabeth House,
2 Hurlock St,
Highbury,
N5 1ED

LONDON: NEWHAM

Workers' power, strikes and challenging India's hard right government

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next
to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTH

Australia to Jakarta—what's behind the climate crisis?

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd,
Brixton, SW2 1EP

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

Australia to Jakarta—what's behind the climate crisis?

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
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SE8 4RH

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Revolt in France—how workers can fight back

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
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10 Shacklewell St,
E2 7EG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Revolt in France—how workers can fight back

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
William Morris
Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
Walthamstow,
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LONDON: WEST & NORTHWEST

Defending Palestine, why opposing Israel is not a crime

Thu 13 Feb, 7.30pm,
Woodlane Community Centre,
78 White City Cl,
Shepherd's Bush,
W12 7DZ

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

Can non-violence change the world?

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
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6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE

The fight for unity in the LGBT+ community

Wed 12 Feb, 7pm,
Floor 2, Commercial
Union House,
39 Pilgrim St,
NE1 6QE

NORWICH

Revolt in France—how workers can fight back

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

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Climate crisis—school students striking to save the planet

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
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Manzil Way,
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A Marxist history of the Labour Party

Thu 20 Feb, 7.30pm,
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Colliton House,
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PORTSMOUTH

Can technology solve the climate crisis?

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Sheffield's radical history—the French Revolution to Peterloo

Thu 13 Feb, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near
Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Does unconscious bias explain racism?

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
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Devonshire Rd,
SO15 2GY

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Revolt in France—how workers can fight back

Thu 13 Feb, 7.15pm,
Light House,
Suite 16, Chubb Bldg,
Fryer St,
WV1 1HT

YORK

Marx's Capital and everyday life

Wed 12 Feb, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
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Parasite is a movie that will resonate all over the world

This film from Korea is winning plaudits as a strange, well-made dark comedy. But more than that, writes **Irang Bak**, its message about inequality is universal

THIS DARK comedy film directed by Bong Joon-ho is about a poor family infiltrating a wealthy household.

Through well-knitted cinematography, Bong tells a thrilling story of two families to show social and spatial inequality.

The cinematic setting is indeed very Korean. The “lower ground floor” flat the family live in has a particular meaning in Korean society.

Many Koreans can relate to that flat, with its smell of mould, its lack of sunlight and its unsafe conditions.

Even if you’ve got no experience of such housing yourself, you can still feel and smell it from the images on screen. It’s a sharp contrast to luxurious mansion of the rich family.

The characters struggle daily to cope with economic inequality and poor living conditions with dark humour.

But that reaches its peak with a flood that strikes the household. This is where the class division is revealed in its most crude form.

Desperate

A desperate race begins from the house of the rich on the hill, downwards to a totally different neighbourhood. Down the long stairs, through the tunnels and finally reaching the lower ground floor.

You don’t have to be familiar with the peculiarities of Korean society to appreciate this film.

What Parasite highlights is the appalling level of inequality in every society, which no one can turn away from.

Perhaps that’s why this film is already garnering widespread acclaim. It has already seized the

LIFE IN a lower ground floor flat

Palme d’Or along with multiple international film awards.

There’s also speculation about whether it can be the first ever non-English language film to win the Oscar for best picture.

The issues the movie shows are universal, and fitting of a world witnessing sweeping revolts and uprisings.

Revolutions and protests that removed decades-long dictators last year in Algeria and Sudan were built on the back of similar inequalities and resentments.

It is the poor and the have-nots who suffer the largest blow from natural disasters as we can see from the floods in Indonesia.

The movie reminds us that it is

not the rich and the powerful who pay for the consequences of global warming.

Bong has created a powerful, humorous film that lets us touch, smell, and taste the details of lives of the people of a world in revolt and crisis.

Parasite, directed by Bong Joon-ho, is in cinemas from Friday 7 February

Sensational Man Like Mobeen breaks new ground

TELEVISION

MAN LIKE MOBEEN

Online at bbc.co.uk/iplayer

THE LATEST series of the sitcom-drama Man Like Mobeen is now on BBC3 catch-up, alongside the previous two seasons.

It’s the creation of writer Andy Milligan and comedian Guz Khan, who stars in the lead role.

He’s a gangster going straight in Small Heath, Birmingham.

Mobeen’s parents left for Pakistan and never returned, leaving him the

house and his teenage sister Aksa to look after.

His close mates are the foolish Ate and wise Nate.

Together they deal with a host of hilarious, terrifying and touching local events.

Slapstick

There is no other British TV show that blends serious social issues with slapstick action and stinging one-liners.

Offender rehabilitation, poverty, homelessness, food banks, gang violence and family tensions are part of the thematic mix.

Just one of the factors that puts this show up there with Fleabag as ground-breaking BBC TV is its all-round creative excellence.

Casting, acting, script, editing, camerawork and music are all sensational.

In addition its producers go out of their way to encourage working class children to come forward as

trainees. At a recent Birmingham preview Khan intimated that the likes of



Guz Khan impresses as Mobeen

Idris Elba and Riz Ahmed wanted a part in the latest episodes.

But only Art Malik made the grade, playing a gang master concerned about Smethwick rivals.

Representing

Khan continually insists that he is representing local working class families and lives.

This is the very opposite of sitcom Citizen Khan, and is also a much better representation of Small Heath than Peaky Blinders.

Nick Grant

TELEVISION

SEX EDUCATION

Series Two available now on Netflix

SEX EDUCATION—now in its second series—works because it taps into that particular form of teen angst—the fear that everyone else around you seems to be at it like rabbits.

Asa Butterfield’s Otis continues to charge a tenner to dish out advice from the toilets block of his improbably-American secondary school.

But this is complicated when Jean, his therapist mother, flawlessly played by an unflappable Gillian Anderson, starts working there.

As well as providing no end of horrifyingly embarrassing moments for Otis, her frank—and free—advice starts to threaten his business.

Sex Education is great, and if anything the second is better than the first.

Mishaps

It manages to interweave the various struggles and sexual mishaps of a host of weird and wonderful characters with a bouncy script.

And it takes on everything from sexual assault, STIs and asexuality without the viewer feeling they’ve been hit over the head with a biology textbook.

If you’re looking for information about the bees and the birds, Sex Education probably isn’t for you.

But you could do a lot worse than watching the students at Moordale High grapple with the most fundamental of questions.

Sarah Bates

What’s on at BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop

Transgender Resistance

With author Laura Miles
Friday 28 Feb, 6:30pm
Admission £2, pay on the door



1 Bloomsbury Street,
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bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

A calculation written on a slip of paper and slid across a desk changed the political landscape of the world, seventy five years ago this month.

The Yalta conference—a meeting between Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin—stands out as an attempt by our rulers to smash working class resistance at the end of the Second World War.

The meeting in 1945 was key for the Allied powers in putting an end to revolts across Europe. Both Stalin and Churchill wanted to stamp out the threat of revolution.

British, Russian and US delegates held a series of conferences in 1943, 1944 and 1945—culminating in the Yalta and Potsdam meetings—where they simply carved up the world between them.

They did this without any care for the wishes of the people concerned.

At Yalta, the US, Britain and Russia agreed their “spheres of influence” laid out in a 1944 document.

They agreed to split Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia between British and Russian control.

But it was more than just a power grab—Yalta was an attempt to smash a wave of resistance opposing Nazi occupation. In particular, movements were erupting in Greece, France and Italy.

All the powers involved shared one common fear. They all remembered how the First World War had ended in workers’ revolution across Europe.

They all remembered how close the whole capitalist system had come to being overthrown in the revolt that began in Russia in 1917, spread to Germany in 1918 and then shook almost every country in Europe.

Determined

All the rulers in the Second World War were determined to avoid any repeat. The result was to prolong the war for far longer than necessary. It meant millions more died.

Yalta is a lesson of how—as well as clashing—imperialist powers can work together to maintain their rule.

It was part of a process of cementing control of territories by imperialist rulers and an attempt to crush those who fought the Nazis.

In country after country the Allies imposed governments of their choice. Britain, Russia and the US carved up the world.

Perhaps the clearest example is Greece. Nazi occupation devastated the country. Some 550,000 people died as a result—about 8 percent of



CHURCHILL, ROOSEVELT and Stalin

HOW THEY CARVED UP THE GLOBE

Seventy five years ago, a cabal of world leaders crafted a secret plan to divide up Europe. Socialist Worker looks at how workers’ resistance forced their hand



Greek fighter

the population. Some 402,000 houses were destroyed alongside 1,770 villages and 1.2 million people were left homeless.

The occupation didn’t just produce death, destruction and endless horrors but scenes of mass resistance.

An attempt to introduce conscripted labour for the Nazis was beaten by a popular movement.

On one day, some 200,000 people—a quarter of the



Popular movements were erupting in Italy, France and Greece

population of Athens—marched through the city, enduring “a hail of bullets”.

This demonstration made it impossible to introduce conscription, and Greece became the clearest example of how the Nazi slave labour programmes could be halted.

Armed and organised resistance groups, filled with guerrillas—known as “andartes”—fought back. These resistance fighters led by the Communist Party enjoyed

overwhelming support. By the autumn of 1944 they had driven the Germans out of most of the country.

Around 50,000 Greeks battled the Nazis. Some 19,000 andartes from the biggest resistance group, ELAS, were killed.

Despite receiving almost no international support, the group liberated four-fifths of the Greek mainland from the stranglehold of the occupation.

The victory was not, however, welcomed by the Allied leaders.

The efficiency, organisation and courage of the resistance fighters in Greece terrified Churchill and Stalin.

THE BRITISH had earlier tried to negotiate a “separate peace” with Germany to allow an unopposed landing to “avoid a period of chaos” which might lead to Communist control.

British Brigadier Barker Benfield was clear that, “Our long-term policy towards Greece is to retain her as a British sphere of influence”.

He argued that British troops could be sent to Greece “at the appropriate time” to ensure “British military control of the whole country”.

Eventually British troops were diverted from fighting in Italy and sent to Greece. They landed in December 1944 with Churchill ordering General Scobie, “Do not hesitate to act as if you are in a conquered city where a local rebellion is taking place.”

Scobie acted accordingly—restoring Greece’s pre-war leaders and monarchy, shooting down workers and beginning a civil war that lasted until 1947 with victory for the extreme right after US intervention.

Italy was another key territory. When Nazi forces invaded in 1943 it stoked mass resistance.

A wave of strikes across the country erupted after fascist Benito Mussolini’s army suffered heavy defeats.

The country was in revolt, and the ruling class manoeuvred to re-assert its control.

In order to stop the popular movement military and political leaders chose to ditch Mussolini. They attempted to form a new regime, with the king as a key figurehead.

The new government, led by Colonel Badoglio, crushed strikes and protests. And the Communist Party played a role in disarming revolts, and sought to negotiate new governments.

And while Churchill worried that further revolution was on the horizon, the Communist Parties of France and Italy worked in coalitions, opposing strikes.

In Britain, the Communist Party argued for a continuation of the wartime coalition.

The critical “percentage agreement” at Yalta was the rulers’ response to this wave

of revolt. Churchill listed countries with proposed percentages of division between Russia and the West, and passed this scrap of paper to Stalin.

For instance, it was decided Britain would receive 90 percent of Greece, Russia 10 percent.

Yugoslavia and Hungary would both be divided equally between the forces. Russia would grab 75 percent of Hungary, Britain getting the rest.

“There was a slight pause,” said Churchill.

“Then he took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it and passed it back to us. It was all done in no more time than it takes to set down.”

“After this there was a long silence. The pencilled paper lay on the centre of the table.

“At length I said, ‘might it not be thought of rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an off-hand manner?’” he said.

Imposing the deal meant smashing working class organisation.

For instance, in Greece, Churchill ordered that some 20,000 resistance fighters were sent to North African concentration camps.

IN FRANCE the bulk of the resistance had been led by Communists and by 1945 the Communist Party was the most popular party.

However, Britain and the US, backed by Stalin, ensured the new state was dominated by people who had worked in collaboration with the Nazis under the Vichy regime.

Ultimately the conference was an opportunity to band together to maintain the rule of their class over ordinary people.

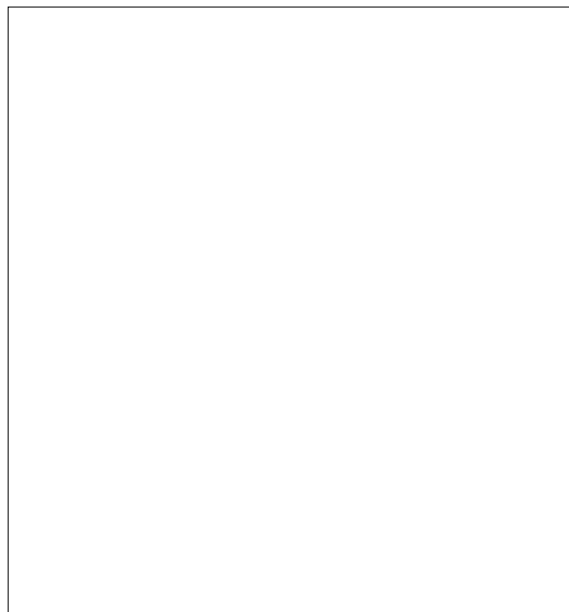
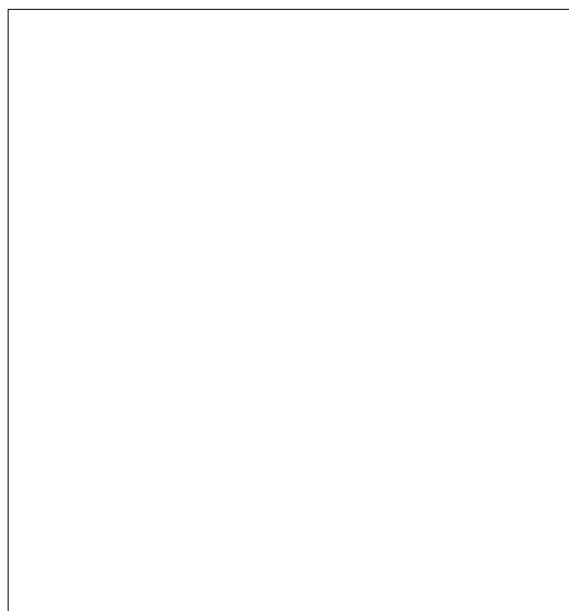
And the ramifications could be felt across the globe.

The deal forged in Yalta saw Russia join the Pacific War and immediately rush to occupy the northern half of Korea. This was one factor that later led to the outbreak of the Korean War.

Despite the tensions within the shaky alliance at Yalta—all the imperialist powers were united in a shared goal.

They claimed they all wanted to enforce a peace throughout Europe—but on their own terms.

It wasn’t driven by a commitment to making life better for ordinary people—but so countries militarily depleted



A DEMO in Athens in 1944 (top) the percentage calculator (above)

by the Second World War could build up arms. Yalta exposed how Stalin’s state capitalism worked in tandem with the interests of the West.

And he used his influence in Eastern Europe to bolster capitalist governments in countries where mass movements struggled to bring about change.

Despite Churchill’s fear of Bolshevism, he claimed he and Stalin got on “like a house on fire”.

Yalta wasn’t the last word on zones of control, borders and international trade agreements. The conferences and deals continue to this day.

But it is an example of what lengths our imperialist rulers will go to enforce their regimes of cruelty, dominance and exploitation across the globe.

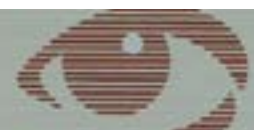
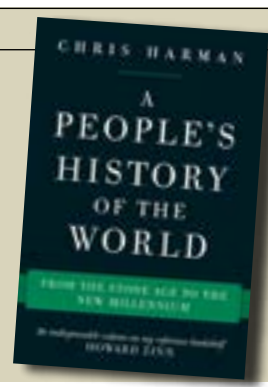
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FOCUS ON BORDERS

Do not value migrants just for their ‘productivity’

We mustn’t let business interests dominate arguments against the Tories’ vicious immigration bill, says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

AS BORIS Johnson prepares to push through a vicious immigration bill, big business interests threaten to dominate arguments against it.

Under Tory proposals, migrants who meet the required skills and incomes thresholds would be allowed in.

Those deemed to be lower skilled will most likely only be allowed to come on a “temporary visa route” and will not be allowed to bring family over.

Some of the evidence in last month’s Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report into a points-based system is useful.

Its chair, Professor Alan Manning, branded a points-based system a “soundbite”.

On wages and job opportunities, Manning said that “pretty much the impact is there will be zero effect”.

And he said it would “likely reduce the future growth of the UK population and economy compared to freedom of movement”.

But simply saying migrants are “productive” or “good for the economy” isn’t enough.

Idea

As socialists we should argue that reducing the argument to the productivity of migrants reinforces the idea that there are “good migrants” and “bad migrants”.

On the one hand there are doctors, nurses or teachers, on the other migrants’ family members who don’t work, pensioners, students or refugees.

This false division helps to strengthen racism against all migrants.

In Britain, the “low skilled” would face a supercharged hostile environment with restricted access to health and other public services.

Capitalism relies on divide and rule of working class

THE WINDRUSH Generation are now facing deportations

BACK STORY

The Tories are continuing to attack migrants’ rights

● Boris Johnson’s vicious immigration bill will divide migrants based on ‘skill’

● Those deemed ‘low skilled’ will have fewer rights

● Many bosses are opposed to the bill because they want freedom to exploit people

● The bosses aren’t on the side of migrant workers

● We need a defence of immigration that isn’t based on what’s good for business

expansion, for instance, after 1945 when the “Windrush Generation” came, or during the growth of eastern European immigration in the 2000s.

In the rows over Brexit, a tension between the Tories and sections of big business has been created.

Dump

The Tories, playing to their base, pledged to dump free movement and ramped up scapegoating of European Union (EU) migrants.

Bosses were desperate to stay in the neoliberal EU and at times seemed like a champions of migrants’ rights. But this isn’t the case.

Bosses care about their ability to fill labour shortages, not workers’ wages or working conditions.

One submission from the Federation of Small Business (FSB) supported a “temporary route which effectively meets the needs of small businesses requiring low skilled labour”.

Bosses and migrant workers do not have the same interests.

To combat racism, the left needs to put forward a defence of immigration that doesn’t rely on what’s good or bad for big business.

This means first and foremost defending freedom of movement for all migrants, and standing in solidarity with any group under attack.

Any form of division between workers—British-born and migrants, skilled or low skilled—weakens the ability of the working class to fight back.



In Britain the low skilled face a supercharged hostile environment

Tainted blood victims treated with contempt

PEOPLE WHO contracted serious diseases after being given contaminated blood were kept in the dark, ostracised and blamed, says a new report.

And authorities' failure to inform victims of their infections put untold numbers of others at risk.

Thousands of people developed hepatitis C, HIV and other diseases after being treated with tainted blood largely during the 1970s and 1980s.

The trauma and stigma they still feel means many felt unable to give evidence in person to the ongoing Infected Blood Inquiry.

Instead, a group of intermediaries visited 85 people to interview them.

Lepers

Interviewers heard repeatedly that those infected had been made to feel like "lepers" by health professionals and others.

Several "described themselves or their loved ones being asked about their lifestyle" with the implication that they were to blame for the infection. People were



THOUSANDS WERE given contaminated blood or blood products

PICTURE: FACTOR 8 CAMPAIGN UK

given news of life-changing illnesses that could severely cut short their lives in hospital corridors, during routine appointments and by letter.

One woman was told, "You could be dead by the time your child is 12."

The report found "many examples of people being denied treatment or isolated

from other patients".

One man spent his last weeks in a psychiatric ward due to the "perceived need to nurse him in isolation".

His wife had to travel on two buses to visit him.

The report said his family weren't informed that he was nearing the end of his life. "On the day he died his wife

took her usual lengthy bus route, with flowers to celebrate their wedding anniversary," it said.

"It was only when she got to the ward and saw the empty bed that she was told he had died."

Victims suffered debilitating physical problems, as well as psychological and

emotional trauma.

Some hid their conditions from their closest family, or felt unable to form relationships for fear of infecting others.

One victim said, "This put my life on hold. It was like marking time."

Many people weren't told they were infected until years after being diagnosed. Several had been giving blood "for many years".

There is fury at the government. One victim, now dead, left a written testimony about her experiences.

"I feel that my country knew where they were sourcing this blood from and when they had the opportunity to correct this terrible disaster by completing a recall programme they failed to carry it through," she said.

British governments imported blood cheaply from the US throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

They were repeatedly warned it was unsafe. But disgracefully the victims were made to feel at fault.

The report described "an enduring sense of being blamed and feeling shame". And some victims feel there

has been a cover up. "Some were told that records of deceased relatives had been destroyed but persevered and successfully retrieved them," said the report.

Protect

One woman told interviewers, "I feel like I have been fobbed off. Why did they make me sign things? I believe it was to stop me taking things further and to protect the government."

And the report heard of one man who died of an HIV-related illness, but whose cause of death was recorded as something else.

"His brother recalls there being some discussion that the doctor had 'done them a favour' as there was such a stigma," it said.

Victims of the contaminated blood scandal have been treated with contempt by the authorities.

And today, Tory cuts mean victims and survivors live in fear of losing the little support they have.

"All expressed anxiety that this support might be reduced as part of austerity measures," the report said.

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The woman who's taking Universal Credit to court

Hated benefits rules left Nichola Salvato in debt over childcare costs. Now, reports **Sadie Robinson**, she's on a legal crusade to have them overturned

A SINGLE parent is taking the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to court over benefits rules that forced her into debt.

Nichola Salvato wants a judicial review of a Universal Credit (UC) rule that means claimants pay up front for childcare even if they are still waiting to receive their payments.

Parents can get up to £646 a month for each child they have under 16 to fund 85 percent of their childcare costs.

But they have to pay first and claim back the costs later—leaving some with huge debts.

“The cost of breakfast clubs and after school clubs can add up to hundreds or even thousands of pounds during the school holidays,” Nichola told Socialist Worker.

“As a single parent, I just don't have a couple of thousand pounds lying around. I had to borrow from friends and family, and take out loans.”

Nichola said the experience was “very, very stressful”.

“There's a constant worry,” she said. “Requesting adjustments to my working hours was stressful.”

Her case exposes the lie that UC “makes work pay”.

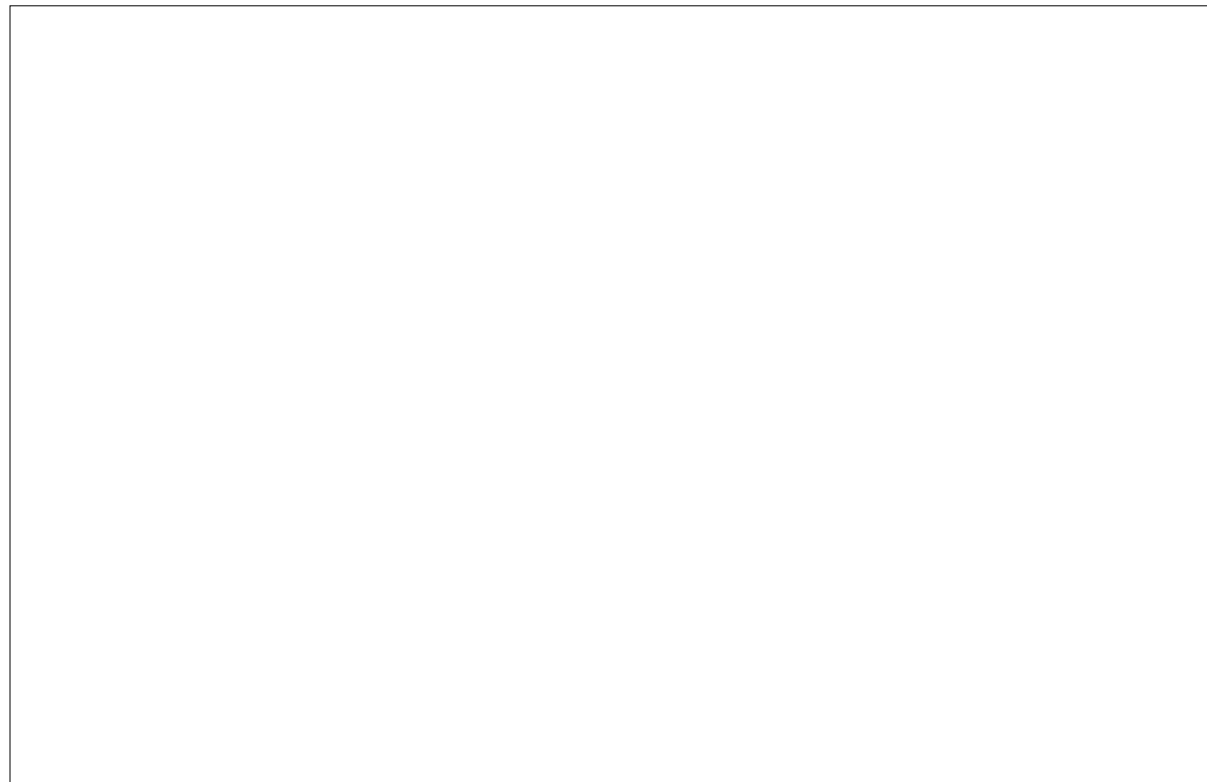
Hours

“Borrowing wasn't enough to pay for my childcare costs, and so I had to reduce my working hours,” said Nichola.

“That frustrated me. The government says the aim of UC is to help people into work.”

Figures show that around 50,000 households, including 42,000 single parents, were claiming childcare costs under UC last August.

The number could reach 500,000



NICHOLA SALVATO is challenging rules that force parents to borrow to cover childcare costs

as more people are moved onto the hated benefit.

Nichola is seeking permission for judicial review of the law. Her legal challenge is backed by the Save the Children charity.

She argues the rule is unlawful, discriminatory and breaches the European Convention on Human Rights.

Save the Children's Becca Lyon said the rule “causes unnecessary hardship to parents on low

incomes—the majority of whom are single mothers”.

Nichola said, “The legislation doesn't say that women have to pay up front. But the demographic of people claiming for childcare are single parents, and they are overwhelmingly women.”

“I've been inundated with messages from people suffering because of this rule, saying thank god someone is doing something about it.”

Nichola expects to hear whether

her challenge will go to a high court hearing in the next few weeks. Meanwhile, she is gathering case studies of how UC has affected people.

“If people want to get in touch and have their story included, they can do that anonymously,” she said.

“Winning a change in the rule would make an enormous difference.”

If you'd like to help with Nichola's legal challenge, you can contact her on nichola.salvato@btinternet.com

Tories guilty of discrimination

THE Court of Appeal has upheld a ruling that the government unlawfully discriminated against thousands of severely disabled people impoverished by Universal Credit (UC).

It dismissed a Department for Work and Pensions challenge to two High Court decisions.

These cases, brought by disabled claimants known as TP and AR, protected claimants who received severe disability premiums against a drop in income under UC.

For more on the cases go to bit.ly/UCcase

Claimants pay for DWP delay

THE government snatched £50 million from Universal Credit (UC) claimants in just one month last year.

Many new claimants have to take Advance Payment Loans as they wait weeks before receiving any benefit. The latest figures available show the DWP deducted £50 million from UC claimants to repay the loans in August last year.

And DWP figures show it took a further £44 million to repay overpayments, errors, arrears and fines.

Man starved to death after benefits were stopped

THE FAMILY of a disabled man who starved to death in Nottingham after the government stopped his benefits fear a “cover up” over his death.

Errol Graham weighed just four and a half stone when his body was found by bailiffs who had arrived to evict him from his home.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had stopped his Employment and Support Allowance in 2017. His housing benefit was

also stopped, leaving him with no income.

A Serious Case Panel will look into Errol's case. The DWP had said the panel includes “independent members”. It later clarified, “They will be independent of the case, not necessarily of the department”.

And it refused to say whether the review would be shared with Errol's family. Errol's daughter in law Alison Turner said, “They all work for the DWP so it's not independent.

They are going to look after the interests of the DWP.” She fears a “deliberate cover up”.

An inquest into Errol's death heard that it is standard DWP procedure to stop benefits of a claimant deemed vulnerable after two failed attempts to visit.

Payment

Yet the DWP stopped one payment due to be credited on the same day it made the second attempt to visit.

Errol suffered mental

distress and starved to death aged 57. His body was found in June 2018.

The DWP had failed to seek medical evidence from Errol's GP before stopping his benefit.

Assistant coroner Elizabeth Didcock said it should have got more evidence from his GP to “make a more informed decision about him”. But she did not demand changes to DWP safeguarding procedures as the DWP said it was already reviewing them.

Several other disabled

people have died after the DWP failed to secure further medical evidence or to check on their welfare before taking away their benefits.

Errol's case came to light because Alison contacted Disability News Service (DNS). She told DNS, “It's truly shocking what the system does to people.”

Errol's ex-partner Diana Burton said, “If DWP hadn't stopped his money, he would still be here today. It's like they are above the law.”

Tell the Tories what you think

Parliament's Economic Affairs Committee has launched an inquiry that will partly look at how UC has impacted on claimants.

The committee has invited anyone with “experience or expertise” of UC to get in touch. The deadline for submissions is 29 February.

Go to bit.ly/UCinquiry to find out more.

IN BRIEF

Vote for strikes at miserly Harrods

WORKERS AT Harrods have delivered a “stonking majority” for strikes against poverty pay.

The west London department store is owned by the multibillion Qatari regime’s wealth fund.

Harrods bosses imposed a below-inflation pay offer.

Unite union members at the shop voted by 97 percent for strikes on an 84 percent turnout.

Strike to prevent cruelty to workers

HUNDREDS OF Unite union members at the RSPCA animal charity are bring balloted for strikes over pay.

Workers overwhelmingly rejected management’s imposition of a new “performance-related pay” contract.

The ballot closes on Thursday 20 February.

Bexley bins refuse to take attacks

BIN WORKERS in Bexley, south east London, are being balloted for strikes over pay and working conditions.

The Unite union members, who are outsourced to Serco, earn about £4 an hour less than colleagues in the neighbouring borough of Greenwich.

Finance workers win in east London

THE UNITE union has declared victory in a pay dispute by finance workers at Newham council in east London.

A dozen council tax benefit managers won a “very significant lump sum” and move to the top of the next grade of the pay scale.

Four more strikes at St George’s

SECURITY GUARDS at St George’s medical school in south London are set to strike for two days from Monday of next week.

The United Voices of the World (UVW) union members are fighting to be brought back in-house from subcontractor Noonan.

They plan a further two-day strike from 24 February.

Tories want to close seven care homes

TORY-RUN Derbyshire county council has announced plans to close seven council-run care homes.

The council claims the homes are not needed.

But its own figures show the numbers of people over 65 and with dementia are set to rise by 50 percent over the next ten years.

Activists have launched a petition.

Jeannie Robinson

TAX OFFICE



TRADE UNIONISTS rallied in solidarity with workers at a west London tax office last week. PCS union members at the HMRC office in Ealing picketed against its closure at the start of a half-day strike last Thursday and stayed out for a full day on Friday.

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

POST

Attacks at Royal Mail spark local strike votes

by NICK CLARK

POSTAL WORKERS at Royal Mail workplaces across Britain are gearing up for local strikes after bosses pushed ahead with attacks on jobs and conditions.

Dozens of local ballots have been launched.

But their CWU union had still not announced a plan for national strikes as Socialist Worker went to press.

Royal Mail bosses want to force through a major assault on postal workers and the CWU. It’s all part of chief executive Rico Back’s plan to break up the service, costing tens of thousands of jobs.

Changes include closing some sorting centres and scrapping some sorting machines—costing jobs.

Trial

Bosses also want to trial a second delivery for large parcels, done by existing workers whose current workload will be taken up by their colleagues.

They’re also trialling later times when parcels are accepted in some areas. And they want to bring in electronic gates to monitor exactly when workers start and finish.

It’s all laying the ground to break Royal Mail up into a parcels delivery company run for profit, with conditions



A mass meeting in Brighton during the last post ballot

similar to other private courier firms. What’s left of the letters delivery service will be run down, and the workers left will be monitored and timed to the second.

Royal Mail bosses delayed a national strike—which workers voted for overwhelmingly last year—by getting a high court injunction to rule the ballot unlawful.

CWU officials went back to talks, but promised to call national action after top managers said they would push ahead with the changes.

Yet some CWU activists are becoming frustrated as union leaders have still not announced a timetable for national action. And at least

one division has called for a national meeting of reps and activists to debate strategy.

A motion passed by the CWU’s Anglia division said, “There needs to be further debate and policy made to recognise the recent developments” in the dispute.

It added that reps from Anglia would contact other regions to back their call for a policy forum.

Royal Mail’s bosses can’t be allowed to delay action any longer while they implement Back’s plan.

CWU divisions should back the call for a national policy forum—and union leaders must announce a plan for national strikes.

SCOTLAND

Unison union backs Scottish referendum

THE UNISON union’s Scottish council has voted to support a second independence referendum at a time chosen by the Scottish parliament.

This means that the issue will now be debated at the STUC union federation’s annual congress in April. The

Scottish parliament voted last week to ask the British government for the powers to hold a second referendum.

But Nicola Sturgeon immediately dampened expectations by calling supporters to be patient and build the case for independence. Her strategy

seems to be about building the SNP’s vote ahead of the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections.

This has generated anger among many supporters.

It will take militant, working class action to win independence.

Bob Fotheringham

MANUFACTURING

Roll out support for all-out walkout at Westex carpets

CARPET WORKERS in West Yorkshire remained “absolutely solid” as they began the 11th week of an indefinite strike over pay.

The Unite union members at Westex carpets in Cleckheaton walked out in November after bosses imposed a pay freeze.

Workers had rejected a 2.25 percent pay offer—lower than the 3 percent annual increases made in previous years.

Kamran, a Unite rep, told Socialist Worker that strikers are “doing our best and everything that we can”

to put pressure onto the company.

But he said that they had received “complete silence” from Westex management who are “bringing in yarn from other companies”.

A day of mass solidarity with trade unionists from across West Yorkshire outside the gates could help to stop yarn supplies.

Trade unionists should organise solidarity to make sure the strikers aren’t forced to return to work with a poor offer from bosses.

●Send solidarity to kelvin.mawer@unitetheunion.org

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bromley goes back to work

LIBRARY WORKERS in Bromley, south east London, went back to work on Wednesday after an all-out strike that lasted eight months.

Unite union members in the borough’s 14 libraries walked out on 6 June after subcontractor Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) failed to fill job vacancies.

Workers feared it would mean job cuts—which bosses confirmed at a meeting with the union in September.

The planned restructure would have seen front line posts slashed from 85 to 55 and a further ten to 15 back office roles cut.

The decision to call off the strike comes after Unite and GLL reached an agreement. A statement from Unite said, “The agreement includes new staffing structures being introduced and no compulsory redundancies.

“Agreement has also been reached on pay progression and arrears’ payments.”

■TRAFFIC WARDENS in Hackney, east London, were set to begin a five-day walkout on Monday of next week.

The Unite union members, who are paid the London Living Wage of £10.75 an hour, are fighting for £15 an hour from April 2020.

Other demands include an improved sick pay package.

The workers are outsourced to Apcoa.

■THE UNITE union suspended a traffic wardens’ walkout in west London after bosses backed off from proposed job cuts.

Outsourcer Serco, which runs the service on a contract for Ealing council, wanted to axe eight out of 60 jobs.

Unite has agreed to the introduction of a new rota system in return.

It said workers could still strike on Wednesday and Thursday “if further progress is not made in the negotiations to finalise the deal”.

OBITUARIES

Dave Waller
1953-2020

COMRADES IN Norwich were saddened to hear about the death of Socialist Workers Party (SWP) member Dave Waller last month.

Dave was a member from 1977 and lived in Norwich for most of his life.

He was a print worker and an active member of various trade unions, including the National Graphical Association (NGA), followed by the Graphical, Paper and Media Union (GPMU) and then Unite.

He played a leading role in strikes.

An avid reader, Dave was largely self-taught but loved SWP meetings for education as well as organisation.

He was active in the Anti Nazi League and Rock



Dave Waller

Against Racism. He was a wonderful man, father and comrade. We particularly send condolences to his wife Julie, sons Jamie and Sean and his two grandchildren.

Julie Bremner

●The funeral will take place on Friday, 7 Feb, 1pm, at GreenAcres Colney crematorium followed by a celebration of his life at the Fat Cat pub, Nelson Street in Norwich

TRANSPORT

Transport pay strike starts with 600 out

by TOMÁS TENGYEL-EVANS

CHANTS OF "Shame" rang out against Transport for London (TfL) bosses at the headquarters in Southwark, south London, as hundreds of workers struck on Thursday of last week.

It marked the first of four walkouts by Unite union members against a 1 percent pay offer to 300 workers on Dial-a-Ride buses and 300 other TfL workers.

They include revenue protection officers, road enforcement officers, compliance officers and others.

One Unite union member, Emily, said that bosses "take the piss with workers". "They try and box us into the corner all the time," she told Socialist Worker.

Pickets

Over 50 workers rallied at TfL's Palestra House and pickets shutdown Dial-a-Ride depots across the capital.

Dave, one of the Unite members at the rally, told Socialist Worker, "There are over 400 staff and we're fed up with TfL."

"The directors keep paying themselves bonuses and pay rises, but have no respect for trade unions or staff."

"Many of us believe there is a bullying culture," he added.

"Every year there is a



PROTESTING AT Transport for London headquarters last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

survey that shows it, every year they say they'll do something about it and then don't."

Gareth Powell, the TfL managing director of surface transport, was paid £305,649 last year.

This was a 10 percent increase on his previous year's salary.

On top of that he also grabbed a bonus of £50,648 in performance related payments. The Dial-a-Ride and

other TfL strikers plan to walk out again on Friday 28 February.

They will be joined by Unite members on the Woolwich Ferry who are fighting for at least the London Living Wage of £10.75 an hour.

Subcontractor Briggs Marine Ltd runs the Thames River crossing in south east London on a contract to TfL.

There a strong possibility that workers on other parts of TfL's surface operations could

be balloted and join future strike days on 27 March and 24 April.

Coordinating industrial action across TfL can ramp up pressure on the bosses.

Every trade unionist should build support for the TfL workers' fight and prepare to join them on the picket lines during future strikes.

● Tweet messages of support to @UniteLondonEast Workers names have been changed.

RAIL GOURMET

'Treat us all with respect'

WORKERS employed by catering firm Rail Gourmet staged a 48-hour strike on Thursday and Friday of last week.

The RMT union members supply catering and refreshments on Great Western Railway services operating from Paddington, west London.

They are fighting for a proper night shift allowance, increased workloads, and an end to defective equipment and management bullying.

"We demand to be treated with respect at work", they said.

Talks between the RMT and the have not resolved any of the issues at the heart of the dispute.

TUBE CLEANERS

Fight to end outsourcing

RMT UNION activists gathered outside parliament on Wednesday last week to demand that tube cleaners are brought back in house with decent wages and conditions.

Joined by a host of Labour MPs, the union is calling for an end to "putting profit before passengers" and "widespread discrimination against cleaning workers".

The 2,000 workers are outsourced to multinational ABM and report horrific working conditions.

Some 68 percent of cleaners surveyed said that they "regularly struggle to make ends meet". And 91 percent said they would like to be brought in-house.

EDUCATION

EIS university pay ballots

EIS-ULA UNION members at 13 Scottish universities have voted for strikes over pay.

Workers are fighting a below-inflation 1.8 percent pay offer.

The union said the offer follows "years of sub-inflationary pay settlements" that have slashed the value of workers' pay by 20 percent.

The overall turnout in the ballots was 52 percent. However, the ballots were disaggregated, meaning each branch is counted separately. The union said action could be called in the six institutions that achieved a turnout of 50 percent or higher, which is the threshold for legal strikes.

These are Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow School of Art, University of Aberdeen, University of Abertay, University of Strathclyde and the University of the West of Scotland.

Workers at Glasgow Caledonian, Heriot Watt, Queen Margaret, Robert Gordon, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow all voted for strikes but did not reach the turnout threshold.

The union said it would consider its next steps this week.

It should call walkouts to coincide with strikes by UCU members in 74 universities, set to start later this month (see page 20).

NEWHAM TEACHERS

WORKERS AT two east London schools were set to strike together on Thursday of this week.

The walkouts in Newham are challenging plans for a Multi Academy Trust.

NEU union members at St Michael's Catholic Primary School are striking against

enforced academisation. Those at St Bonaventure's School are walking out over a transfer of employer.

Both plan a two-day strike from Wednesday of next week, and a three-day strike from Tuesday 25 February.

● Send messages of support to louise.cuffaro@neu.org.uk

UCU ELECTIONS

Vote for Hill and UCU Left

ELECTIONS ARE underway in the UCU union.

The UCU Left, which Socialist Worker supports, is backing Margot Hill for vice president. Margot is a UCU branch secretary at Croydon College in south London.

She is standing on a platform of building resistance to Tory attacks on education, and of empowering ordinary union members to take action. "Marketisation is

the enemy we have to break," said Margot. "When the union puts up a fight, members not only join, they want to be empowered and they want to control the direction and strategy of those fights."

Socialist Worker also backs a slate of UCU Left candidates standing for positions on the union's NEC and as trustees.

● Go to uculeft.org for more information and margot4vpucu

OFFSHORE WORKERS

OFFSHORE OIL workers' unions have slammed bosses' move to tear up an industry wide agreement and undermine workers' rights.

Unions said bosses will terminate the Offshore Contractors Partnership Agreement (OCPA) on 20 June 2020.

Unite, GMB and the RMT said it would "have the effect

of derecognising the trade unions". A joint statement said, "The trade unions want to avoid the potential for a race to the bottom on terms and conditions and the inevitable impact that would have on health and safety."

"We await the response of industry."

Unions should organise a ballot for strikes.

REFUGEE SOLIDARITY

Activists rally for refugees

OVER 250 activists attended the Refugee Solidarity Summit on Friday and Saturday last week.

It brought together campaigners, activists, grassroots organisations and others at a critical time for refugees and asylum seekers.

It was organised by Solidarity with Refugees UK and other organisations.

Refugees face new attacks from the Tory government such as the restrictions on

unaccompanied children joining family members in Britain.

The summit was opened with a keynote address from Lord Alf Dubs.

Stand Up to Racism led off a workshop on fighting deportations

Support for refugees is one of the important themes of the 21 March anti-racism demonstrations in London and Glasgow.

Barbara Sansome

BUS WORKERS

20,000 London bus workers vote on fight against fatigue

BUS DRIVERS in London are getting ready to vote for militant action over widespread worker fatigue.

In a move that could see 20,000 bus drivers strike in the future, the Unite union planned to hold a consultative ballot for strikes on Friday this week.

Workers are fighting for a raft of measures that will reduce exhaustion of London bus drivers and improve passenger safety.

A recent study showed that 17 percent of London bus drivers had fallen asleep at the wheel at least once in the past year.

Their union has seven demands. It's fighting for

safer scheduling, full rest breaks, realistic running times, workers finishing on time, proper training, improved stand time and for drivers to be treated with respect.

Unite regional officer John Murphy said, "London bus drivers have had enough. They are permanently fatigued and at risk of being a danger to other road users, bus passengers and themselves."

Unite is urging people to vote for action because of the bosses' failure to implement any effective measures over many years.

"It's time to act," said the union.

STRIKES DEFY FRENCH COPS

by CHARLIE KIMBER

ANOTHER DAY of national strikes and demonstrations was set for Thursday this week in France.

Anyone who saw footage from last week of striking firefighters beating the CRS riot police will have cheered their defiance.

Around 10,000 firefighters had come to Paris protesting over pensions and other issues.

They paraded in emergency gear, disobeying orders not to wear protective clothing on demonstrations.

Their union reps then reported that, having met with the government, they had been offered nothing.

"It was disgusting to hear this," firefighter Thomas told Socialist Worker.

Traffic

"We decided we were going to block traffic on the Paris ring-road in protest.

"Of course the police tried to push us back."

Cops fired stun grenades, deployed water cannon and tear gas, and used



FIREFIGHTERS TAKE on the police in Paris after cops tried to stop them from marching

truck-mounted barriers. They shot a firefighter in the head at close range with a rubber bullet.

Firefighters then broke open the truck-mounted barrier and continued the battle for hours.

The unions have a strategy of calling one-day mobilisations to coincide with significant dates in the

parliamentary scrutiny of the pension changes.

But with indefinite strikes ended nearly everywhere, the government is stepping up repression.

Around 40 strikers at waste incineration plants near Paris who been part of a strike since 23 January are in the process of being "requisitioned". This would instruct

strikers to return to work under threat of prosecution.

However, there are signs of fresh waves of militancy.

A big movement of school students and teachers is resisting the new E3C testing regime. Blockades, occupations and walkouts have forced the cancellation of tests in dozens of schools.

The militancy at the

base of the unions is not in doubt. But union leaders are moving towards seeking deals that fall far short of the withdrawal of president Emmanuel Macron's attacks.

The CGT union has agreed to extended talks with government representatives around pension financing—consultation that the CGT has previously denounced.

SIXTH FORMS

College workers get set for more action over funding and pay

WORKERS AT 34 sixth form colleges were set to strike on Wednesday of next week.

The action is the fourth walkout for NEU union members in their battle to win more funding.

Jean Evanson is the post-16 national executive committee member for the union.

She told Socialist Worker, "People remain angry with the funding situation and the complete reluctance of the government to put money into post-16 education.

"Things aren't getting any better in sixth form colleges. The issues



Sixth form workers plan more walkouts

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

driving people to take action are workload, lack of support for students and growing class sizes."

The threat of strikes previously pushed the government to pledge an extra £400 million for sixth form colleges.

But as Jean said, "That's not enough. We need £1.1 billion to make up for what we have lost."

The union plans further strikes on 27 February and 10 March, the day before the budget.

Strikers will rally in Westminster Square and hold a lobby of parliament on 27 February.

Indicative ballots are

taking place across all sixth form colleges, as original strike ballots will soon expire.

The NEU said formal ballots will follow after half term.

It said the ballots "will allow action in the summer term and also in late September and early October".

Jean said, "The new ballots mean that future strikes could be even bigger.

"It's important to get strong results in the indicative ballots.

"And we need support from other trade unionists for our strikes."

UCU calls 14 days of walkouts

STRIKES WILL hit 74 universities across Britain in February and March.

The action will begin with a two-day walkout on Thursday 20 February.

UCU union members will then escalate strikes each week, ending with a week-long strike. They will strike for 14 days in total.

Workers are engaged in two disputes. One is to defend their pension scheme.

The other is to fight for a real terms pay rise, plus changes to contracts and workloads.

Union members at 60 universities held a fantastic eight-day strike last year. Now 14 more branches will join the action after rebalancing for strikes.

Some 35 out of 37 branches rebalanced voted for walkouts, and 14 met the Tories' 50 percent turnout threshold for legal strikes.

Threshold

Roddy is the UCU branch organiser at Imperial College London, which met the threshold this time.

"We got a really good result and our reps are all very pleased," he told Socialist Worker. "There's a lot of class anger."

Bosses made a new offer to workers as the rebalancing closed.

Roddy said the offer was "honeyed words" with no real promises.

And UCU negotiator Jo McNeill told Socialist Worker, "This is not an offer we can accept."

Bosses have refused to budge from a below-inflation pay deal.

Their offer is a green light to keep casual contracts, low pay, soaring workloads and stress.

Last year's strikes won support from workers and students, and drew thousands of new members to the union.

Workers can win.